App. W. IX-4

Previous References. 1945-46 ( ) File No. 217/G.
Serial Nos.

Later References.

GENERAL AND REVENUE SECRETARIAT

Serial Nos.

Part B for

SUBJECT

Development of the Bhatkal Harbour and Construction of the Chamarajanagar–Mettupalaiyam Ry.

M. [illegible]

Note of discussion with Sir Edward Benthall, Member, War Transport

General and Revenue Secretariat | File No. | of 194 . | [App. F. III-2

H. RANGACHAR, M.A.,
GENERAL MANAGER.

RAILWAY SECRETARIAT D. 1491 18 DEC 1945

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE,
MYSORE STATE RAILWAY.

Mysore, 10th December 1945.

CONFIDENTIAL D. O. No. P.C. 153.

Encl: Note in duplicate

Dear Sir,

25/12

1) On the 6th instant, I reported to you personally the conversation that I had had with Sir Edward Benthall, the Hon'ble Member for War Transport, during my recent visit to Delhi, in regard to the several projects. I also reported the same to the Dewan subsequently and he instructed me to submit confidentially a note containing the summary of the discussion. I accordingly submit herewith two copies of the note.

2) No 2nd Copy has been sent to Secy. Mys for info 13/12

Yours sincerely,

H. Rangachar

3) To Dewan

To
O. Pulla Reddi, Esq., M.A., I.C.S.,
Minister for Revenue,
Government of Mysore,
Bangalore.

4) This was submitted to His Highness with a covering note by the Minister

5) Member for Rev with Secy (G) 17/12

D. F. M. is put up Min (Rev.) 20/12

6) D. F. M. Secy. 21/12

Signed J. N. (20 Jan 46) Minister for Revenue

12.1.45 Dewan 12/1/46

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR REVENUE
No. 65 L.A.
Dated 3-1-46.

DEWAN'S OFFICE
15 JAN 46
NO. 4187

NOTE—Contn. Sheet.

Final Note by the Minister for Revenue

Subject.— The Bhatkal Harbour and the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway projects of Post-War Schemes.

The questions relating to the development of the Bhatkal Harbour which is nearest to the State and its connection with the State Railway by constructing about 49 miles of railway have been under consideration ~~for~~ a long time. The fulfilment of the two projects will undoubtedly offer great facilities for travel and trade in the outlying areas of the State by providing short and cheap outlets to exports and imports, more so of the industrial area around Bhadravati and Jog. The construction of the proposed railway further enables the working of the extensive Ghat Forests yielding additional forest revenue.

With such great advantages to the State in view, the Dewan and I discussed the questions, at length, with Sir Edward Benthall, Hon'ble Member, War Transport Department, Government of India, during his recent visit to Mysore in November 1945. Subsequently, the Government of India have been moved, through the Residency, to secure a high priority for the projects in the Post-War Reconstruction programme and to have the engineering surveys and other preliminary steps undertaken as early as possible. Besides, a Conference of the representatives of the Governments concerned has been suggested to the Residency as the best way of settling all preliminary issues in the matter.

The General Manager, Mysore State Railways, who visited Delhi early in December last to attend the meeting of the Railway Board, discussed these and other allied questions with Sir Edward Benthall and other officers of the Board. His discussions disclose the following main points as requiring attention:-

The considered opinion of Sir Edward Benthall was that the Bhatkal Harbour project required further investigation and that

...

it involved two main questions. The first was the feasibility and practicability of the project and the second the jurisdiction of the Harbour and the Railway line areas. In his opinion, there were customs and sentimental difficulties in the way of the Government of Bombay agreeing to cede the territory. As this matter did not concern him or his Department, he held that it should be settled between the Government of Mysore and the Government of Bombay. Regarding the project proper, he said that there were proposals for developing "rival harbours", that the constitution of a small Committee to investigate the question of the development of minor deep sea ports and to consider the relative advantages of different projects was under contemplation and that the Government of Mysore might go ahead with their investigations and be prepared to satisfy the Committee about feasibility and advantage of the project.

As regards the construction of the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway, Sir Edward Benthall felt that it would materialise eventually though it might not be given priority and taken up at once. When the urgency of the construction with necessary reasons and advantages both to British India and Mysore was pointed out to him by the General Manager, the Hon'ble Member seemed to have replied that he would bear in mind all the points, give sympathetic consideration and suggested also to the General Manager to interest the Chief Commissioner and the Railway Board in the matter. The General Manager has later learnt that the programme of constructions in regard to through Railways passing between British India and Indian States has not yet been fixed and that they are awaiting reports from the Residents regarding railway lines passing through more than one State. He hopes to receive information of the time when the subject is likely to be considered by the Board, when he can put forth the case in all its aspects for the consideration of the Board and the Chief Commissioner. Sir Edward Benthall has enquired also whether the Government of Mysore were prepared to finance the construction of Chamarajnagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway. The General Manager has replied that, though he could not give a definite reply, he remembered from the correspondence that the State was prepared to construct the line out of its funds and work the Railway. This point will be further examined.

Regarding additional locomotives and wagons to the Mysore State Railways, the General Manager, has reported that the Railway Board have agreed to address the Military Headquarters to spare, if they can, about SIX locomotives and 200 wagons on hire to meet the immediate traffic requirements in the State.

In this connection I enclose the letter written to me by Sir Edward Benthall from Bombay and a copy of the reply I sent him.

The relevant papers are submitted, herewith, for the gracious perusal of His Highness.

O. Pulla Reddi

Bangalore,
Dated 12th Jan. 1946.

Minister for Revenue.

Submitted to His Highness.

I submit herewith a Final Note by the Minister for Revenue on the questions relating to the development of the Bhatkal Harbour and the construction of the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway, for the gracious perusal of His Highness.

O. Pulla Reddi

Bangalore,
15th January 1946.

MINISTER FOR REVENUE
in charge of the current duties of the Dewan.

Record of Cases submitted for the Orders of His Highness the Maharaja.

Subject.

Development of the Bhatkal Harbour a
construction of the Chamarajanagar-Mettupala
Railway.

543

Order.

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General and Revenue Secretariat.

SUBJECT:—

Development of the Bhatkal Harbour and construction of the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiya Railway.

(*)

14. All urgent or confidential files returned with His Highness' orders may, in the absence of instructions or indications to the contrary, be ordinarily circulated to the Ministers for perusal after the issue of orders.

16. The Secretaries concerned should see that orders in the cases referred to above are issued at once and that the files are returned immediately after, to the Chief Secretary for circulation to the Ministers.

17. In all other cases, the files will first be circulated to the Ministers at Headquarters and then sent to the Secretariat concerned for the issue of orders.

Chief Secy) Fav. of O.
W.C. 25/1/46

Circulated to Council of Ministers for perusal of His Highness' orders before/after issue of orders. (*Vide* Rules 14, 16 and 17 of the Subsidiary Rules of the Mysore Government Business Rules.) (*)

Narayana Rao
Chief Secretary to Government
23/1/46

Through the Secretary to Government,

Railway.....Department. 24/1/46

Minister for Revenue. (Seen)

4024/25.1.46

Minister for Agriculture. 31/1

Minister for Education and Public Health. 2/2/46

Minister for Law. 4/2/46

5710/5/2

Minister for Public Works. 2.2.46.

NOTE.—Contn. sheet

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Rr Secy

Recvd 2/2/46

Recvd 2/2/46

RANGACHAR. M.A.,
GENERAL MANAGER.

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE,
MYSORE STATE RAILWAY.

Mysore, 2nd November 1945.

D. O. 208

Dear Sir,

I submit herewith a draft copy of a note on the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway, together with two Blue Prints.

A copy of this note, together with the Blue Prints, has also been sent to the Private Secretary for submission to the Dewan.

Yours sincerely,

T A Ramachar

To

O.Pulla Reddi, Esq., M.A.,I.C.S.,
Minister for Revenue,
Government of Mysore,
BANGALORE.

Singh/

CHAMARAJANAGAR-SATYAMANGALAM-METTUPALAIYAM RAILWAY

1. The project and its history:

The Mysore State Railway system now terminates as a dead-end at Chamarajanagar, the southernmost station in the State. At an approximate distance of 100 miles, as the crow flies, is the Metre Gauge system of the South Indian Railway. Projects for connecting the two systems directly, instead of by the present circuitous routes, have been under consideration, in one form or other, for over half a century.

(i) The earliest of these was a proposal to connect Nanjangud, the then terminus of the Mysore State Railway, with Erode via Satyamangalam, thus providing a through Metre Gauge connection by the Erode-Trichy Chord Line. Between the years 1891, when a reconnaisance survey of this line was made by Mr. McHutchin, the Chief Engineer, Mysore, and 1916, when a traffic survey of the line was conducted under Mr. Richards, the Engineer-in-Chief appointed by Railway Board for the Mysore West Coast Railway survey, three Engineering Surveys of this line had been made by the South Indian Railway Company. With the conversion of the Erode-Trichinopoly chord into Broad Gauge in 1928, the project had to be abandoned as the objective of the direct Metre Gauge connection could not be achieved by taking the Railway to Erode. Alternative connections had therefore to be investigated.

(ii) In 1926, the Government of India sanctioned a detailed survey for a Metre Gauge line from Satyamangalam to Palni, a station

on the Podanur-Pollachi-Dindigul Chord Line via Tiruppur and Dharapuram. If this line had been constructed, it would have provided a direct connection via Satyamangalam to the Metre Gauge system of the South. But this project was however abandoned by the Government of India in 1932 as the anticipated return on capital was inadequate and funds for the construction of the line were not available.

(iii) The nearest station therefore with a Metre Gauge line at present is at Coimbatore which is the terminus of the Dindigul-Palni-Podanur Line. The proposal therefore at present is to connect Chamarajanagar with Coimbatore by a Metre Gauge line from Chamarajanagar to Mettupalaiyam via Satyamangalam and a third rail laid on the existing Broad Gauge track between Mettupalaiyam and Coimbatore. This line provides direct Metre Gauge connection to South Indian Railway via Podanur and Dindigul. The Blue Print 'A' submitted herewith shows (a-i) the abandoned projects of Nanjangud-Erode line and (ii) the Chamarajanagar-Satyamangalam-Tiruppur-Palni lines and (b) also the proposed line from Chamarajanagar to Mettupalaiyam via Satyamangalam visa vis the Railways of the area. Another Blue Print showing the alignment of the Chamarajanagar-Satyamangalam-Mettupalaiyam line on a toposheet tracing of the area is also submitted.

2. The country traversed by the Chamarajanagar - Mettupalaiyam Railway:

The length of the proposed Railway from Chamarajanagar to Mettupalaiyam is 86 miles of which 11 miles lie in the Mysore State and 75 miles in British India. The first 26½ miles will be on the Deccan Plateau 2,000 to 3,000 feet above Mean Sea Level and the last 38 miles will be on the plains of Madras, 900 feet and above Mean Sea Level. The intermediate section of nearly 23 miles will be a difficult Ghat Section where a discent of approximately 2,000 feet from the plateau to the plains has to be negotiated. The entire ghat section lies in the British territory.

3. The present position of the project:

A Traffic Survey of the proposed Chamarajangar-Satyamangalam-Mettupalaiyam Railway was conducted by the representatives of the three Railways, viz. South Indian, M. & S. M. and Mysore State. The officers could not come to an unanimous conclusion. The majority, consisting of officers of the South Indian and the Mysore State Railways, was of the opinion that the project was a paying one and should be taken up early. The representative of the MSM Railway dissented and was against the project. Due to the war the Railway Board, however, deferred the consideration of the question. This is how the matter stands at present.

4. The Capital Cost of the Line:

The estimate capital cost of the Railway is approximately 2.01 crores of rupees, for the line from Chamarajanagar to Mettupalaiyam

and Rs.7.5 lakhs for laying the Mixed Gauge between Mettupalaiyam and Coimbatore, the total outlay thus being 2.08 crores of rupees. This estimate, however, is not based on any recent Engineering Survey and is therefore only an approximate estimate. It may be added that the capital cost estimated for the line between the Mysore Frontier and Satyamangalam, common to all the projects, has varied considerably from time to time. According to an Engineering re-survey of the line and detailed estimates framed in 1912 by the South Indian Railway, the estimated cost of the Railway was Rs.75.5 lakhs for the 45.3 miles between the Mysore Frontier and Satyamangalam lying ~~xxx~~ in the British territory. Subsequently, Mr. G.Richards, Chief Engineer, attached to the Railway Board, revised the estimate in 1916-17 for Rs.83 lakhs, but in 1928, the South Indian Railway estimated the abstract cost at Rs.191 lakhs and according to a further abstract given by them in 1932, the cost was reduced to Rs.163 lakhs, at which figure it stands at present.

5. <u>The pros and cons of the project</u>:

As out of the 86 miles of the proposed Railway, 75 miles lie in the British territory involving a capital outlay of Rs.2 crores, by far the largest share of the construction devolves on the Government of India. They have not viewed the project so far favourably and their point of view may be summarised as follows:

(1) The project which involves a heavy capital outlay on their part, is not remunerative as far as they are concerned and is of no

material advantage to them. The traffic needs of the area in the British territory do not justify a costly railway line like this.

(ii) The construction of this direct line involves the shortening of the distances between important areas in the North and South India. This means that the traffic which is now passing on the Government of India Railways will be diverted to this new route, to the great benefit of the Mysore State, but to the disadvantage and loss to the existing Railway lines in British India. In fact, their view is that the Mysore State stands to profit ~~lending~~ undue but of all proportion to their capital and are therefore urging the construction of the line.

As against this, it has to be stated that though the Mysore State Railway undoubtedly benefits by the construction of this line, it is not solely or even principally on this ground that the Mysore Government are urging the construction of the line. They have, on many occasions previously, expressed their willingness to share on some equitable basis, the net profits accruing to Mysore State Railway by the diversion of traffic on account of the proposed line. Their advocacy of this project is on much larger considerations, the most important of which are the following:

(i) This line provides a direct short connection between the southern part of Mysore State and adjoining area of British India. There is already a large volume of trade between these areas. The provision of this Railway will lead greatly to the opening up of the areas and to the development of trade and commerce.

How great the saving in distance between important places in Mysore and South India is, will be seen from the following comparative table of distances:

Pairs of stations	Distance by road.	Distance by existing Railway	Distance if proposed Railway is constructed.
		(M I L E S)	
(1) Mysore and Tellicherry	115	498	302
(2) Nanjangud and Calicut	116	472	244
(3) Chamarajanagar & Coimbatore	89	384	97
(4) Mysore and Ootacamund	100	399	153
(5) Nanjangud and Cochin Harbour			
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It is a great burden on the existing trade and commerce of the area that it has to travel ~~either by road~~ by Railways, three to four times the natural distance to find its market The projected Railway, by shortening distances, will contribute largely to the economic development of the areas both in Mysore State and Madras Presidency.

(ii) With the construction by the State of the Chamarajanagar-Kollegal line, which is a feeder to the projected Railway, a large part of Coimbatore District and Mysore District will be opened up.

(iii) The projected Railway provides incidentally a direct short Metre Gauge connection at present between the Metre Gauge system of Hyderabad, Southern Mahratta and Mysore, with that of South India. With the completion of Khandwa-Hingoli line, it provides an unbroken direct Metre Gauge connection from North India to South India.

(iv) From the strategic xx point of view it offers alternate route on the Metre Gauge from one end of India to another.

It thus eliminates bottle-necks at transhipment points and leads to an increase in the capacity of Railways in India. It need hardly be stressed that if the link had been in existance, it would have easily eased to a considerable extent, the problem of transport during this war.

(v) This link also contributes to the development of traffic to the Cochin Port.

The line is not likely to be unremunerative to Government of India. In any event, the decided policy of the Government at present is that, in deciding on construction of the new line, the sole criterion will not be the direct return on the capital invested, but that due consideration will be given to the other indirect advantages such as the development of a country, etc. If a Railway line opens up a country and leads to its economic and other developments, the line will be constructed even though the return on capital may be poor. This line is of great importance in opening up of the country in South Mysore and Madras Presidency, and in developing the trade and commerce of the area. On account of these advantages, it is a beneficial project which should be taken up early in the interests both of Mysore and British India.

J.A. Rawlence
2.11.45.

DEWAN OF MYSORE

CARLTON HOUSE,
BANGALORE.

4th November 1945.

No. 1516/45-46.

Dear Mr. Pulla Reddi,

Sir Edward Benthall, Honourable Member, War Transport Department, Government of India, proposes to come to Mysore on the 11th November. I wish to take the opportunity of discussing with him the question of the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalyam Railway Project. I have had a note prepared by the General Manager, Mysore State Railway, on the project which I am sending herewith for your perusal.

I expect to be in Mysore on the morning of the 11th instant and shall be glad if you are also there to meet Sir Edward Benthall.

Yours sincerely,

N. Madhava Rau

O. Pulla Reddi, Esq., M.A., I.C.S.,
Minister for Revenue,
BANGALORE.

CHAMARAJANAGAR-SATYAMANGALAM-METTUPALAIYAM RAILWAY

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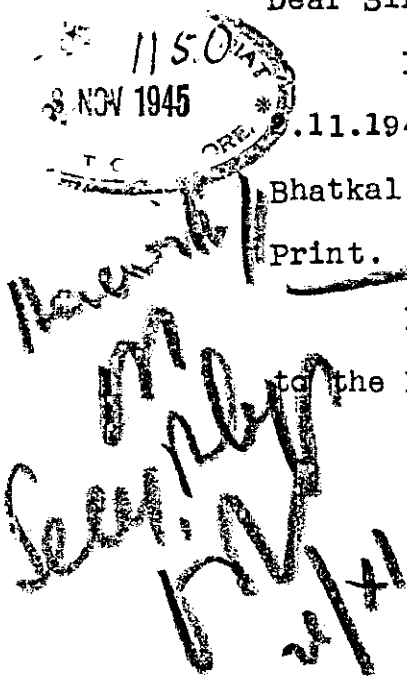
S. Ranganathan
2-11-45

H. RANGACHAR, M.A.,
GENERAL MANAGER.

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE.
MYSORE STATE RAILWAY.

Mysore, November 1945.

D. O. No. 211/Encs.



Dear Sir,

In continuation of my D.O. No.208 dated 9.11.1945, I submit herewith a draft note on Bhatkal Harbour, together with a Map and a Blue Print.

I have sent a copy to the Private Secretary to the Dewan for submission to Dewan.

Yours sincerely,

H. Rangachar

To

O.Pulla Reddi, Esq., M.A.,I.C.S.,
Minister for Revenue,
Government of Mysore,
BANGALORE.

Singh/

THE BHATKAL HARBOUR PROJECT

1. A glance at the map of India will show that, though the frontiers of Mysore run close to the Arabian Sea, being in some cases less than 15 miles as the crow flies, there is no harbour in close proximity to serve the interests of trade and commerce of the State. The nearest harbours on the West Coast of India are Mormugao, 434 miles distant, Bombay 788 miles from Bangalore and Mysore and Cochin 480 miles from Mysore. The Madras harbour is 220 miles from Bangalore and 394 from Shimoga, and involves a break of gauge. A port which is connected with a Railway of the same gauge as that of Mysore Railway, viz. Metre Gauge, and is at the same time in close proximity to the State, particularly to the big industrial centres, is a great desideratum for the development of the country. Bhatkal, which is only 14 miles from the frontier of the State and where a suitable harbour can be constructed, answers satisfactorily to these requirements.

Bhatkal which is situated in the Bombay Presidency in the West Coast of India in 13° 58' N.Lat. and 74° E.Long. is at present a minor port of no importance.

2. <u>The project and investigations so far made</u>

The project is to construct a modern up-to-date harbour at Bhatkal and suitable for steamers of Suez Canal draft and extend the Shimoga-Talaguppa Railway to connect with it. In regard to the construction of the harbour, the following investigations have been made:

(i) In 1915, Sir Francis Spring, Chairman of the Madras Port Trust, investigated the

question at the request of the Government of Mysore. He was of opinion that an inner harbour in which modern vessels could be alongside the quay was not practicable at reasonable cost on account of the hard rock which he believed to exist below the surface of the creek. He however thought that one of the two following schemes was practicable:

(A) An outer harbour where steamers can be at moorings, the cargoes being discharged by means of lighters working between ship and shore. Capital estimated - Rs. 170 lakhs.

(B) A less ambitious scheme estimated to cost Rs.50 lakhs in which lighters may shelter in the creek and work passengers and cargo between the shore and small coasting steamers anchored outside without shelter.

(ii) The matter was again investigated in 1917 by Sir Frederic Sprott, Chairman, and Mr. Fosberry, Deputy Chief Engineer of the Bombay Port Trust. They were of opinion that there would be no difficulty in constructing a harbour from an engineering point of view and recommended a scheme for an outer enclosure and an entrance therefrom to an inner basin, which could accommodate four Suez Canal size steamers in the first stage and could be developed to accommodate 9 later. The cost estimated was Rs.107 lakhs.

(iii) An alternative to the above scheme was prepared by Mr. H.D.Rice, Superintending Engineer, Mysore Public Works Department, for building a small dock with a protected entrance at an estimated cost of Rs.60 lakhs.

(iv) Mr. A.G.Lyster of the firm of Sir James Wolfe Barry Lyster and Partners, Consulting Harbour Engineers, London, who was consulted on all the above schemes did not approve of any of them but suggested two alternative schemes: (a)for a dock to be located in the creek at an estimated cost of Rs.144 lakhs or (b)constructing a dock inland half way between Light House Hill and Bhatkal Town at an outlay of Rs.170 lakhs.

These investigations have established the feasibility of an up-to-date modern harbour being constructed at Bhatkal.

The surveys for a Railway Line from Shimoga to Bhatkal, 111 miles long, were also made in 1918 and 1919. Of this Railway, 62 miles from Shimoga to Talaguppa have been constructed leaving only 49 miles to be constructed to reach the Harbour.

A traffic survey of the Railway and the harbour was conducted by Mr. H.Rangachar, now General Manager. He estimated that the traffic that would find its way to the Harbour was 200,000 tons per annum and that the combined project of the Railway and Harbour was a paying proposition yielding a return of over 4% on capital.

A Railway map of Mysore showing the connection to Bhatkal and a blue print of a topo sheet tracing showing the alighment of Shimoga-Bhatkal Railway are submitted herewith.

3. Jurisdiction over the Harbour:

In 1916, the Government of Mysore made a formal request to Government of India to develop a harbour at Bhatkal and construct a

railway thereto from the Mysore Frontier. In January 1917, a conference was held under the presidency of His Excellency the Governor of Bombay at which the Hon'ble the Resident and the Dewan of Mysore were present. The Government of Bombay had no objection to the construction of the Harbour and the Railway ~~link~~ by the Mysore Government. They were however unwilling to cede jurisdiction of any kind over the Railway and the Harbour area. As the Government of Mysore felt that, without jurisdiction, it was not possible to work the Railway and the Harbour satisfactorily, the negotiations were inconclusive.

The subject was informally discussed in 1923 by the Dewan of Mysore with His Excellency the Viceroy, but as the Gov'rnment of India seemed doubtful whether the project would be a successful proposition financially and commercially and were reluctant to commit themselves to a decision on the question of jurisdiction, the matter was not pursued.

The question has however been taken up again recently by the Government of Mysore and the Hon'ble the Resident was addressed in January 1945 to arrange for a conference of the representatives of the Government of India, Railway Board, and Government of Bombay to consider the question and come to a settlement. The Hon'ble the Resident has replied that the question of development of ports of India was under investigation by a Committee appointed by the Government of India and that this question may be considered on receipt of their report. The report of the Committee has since been received. This is the stage at which the matter stands at presen

4. The advantages of the project:

(i) Bhatkal is the harbour nearest to the State which can be developed and connected with the Mysore State Railway by constructing only about 49 miles of Railway.

(ii) The project leads to the opening up of country in Mysore and British India. The nearest Railway Line to Bhatkal is at Mangalore - 80 miles away in the south and at Mormugao 118 miles away in North. The provision of a Railway in this area opens up the country and offers great facilities for travel and trade in the coastal ~~and~~ area in British India. The project is of great developmental value to this area in British India.

(iii) There is little prospect of a Harbour being developed and Railway connection provided at Bhatkal except by Mysore which is most favourably situated for the purpose.

(iv) The Port will provide a short and cheap outlet to the export and import of North Mysore and particularly of the Industrial area in Bhadravati and Jog.

(v) The completion of the Hydro-Electric project at Jog and availability of cheap power is sure to lead to the establishment of many industries in the area. The Harbour will offer a great stimulus to this development.

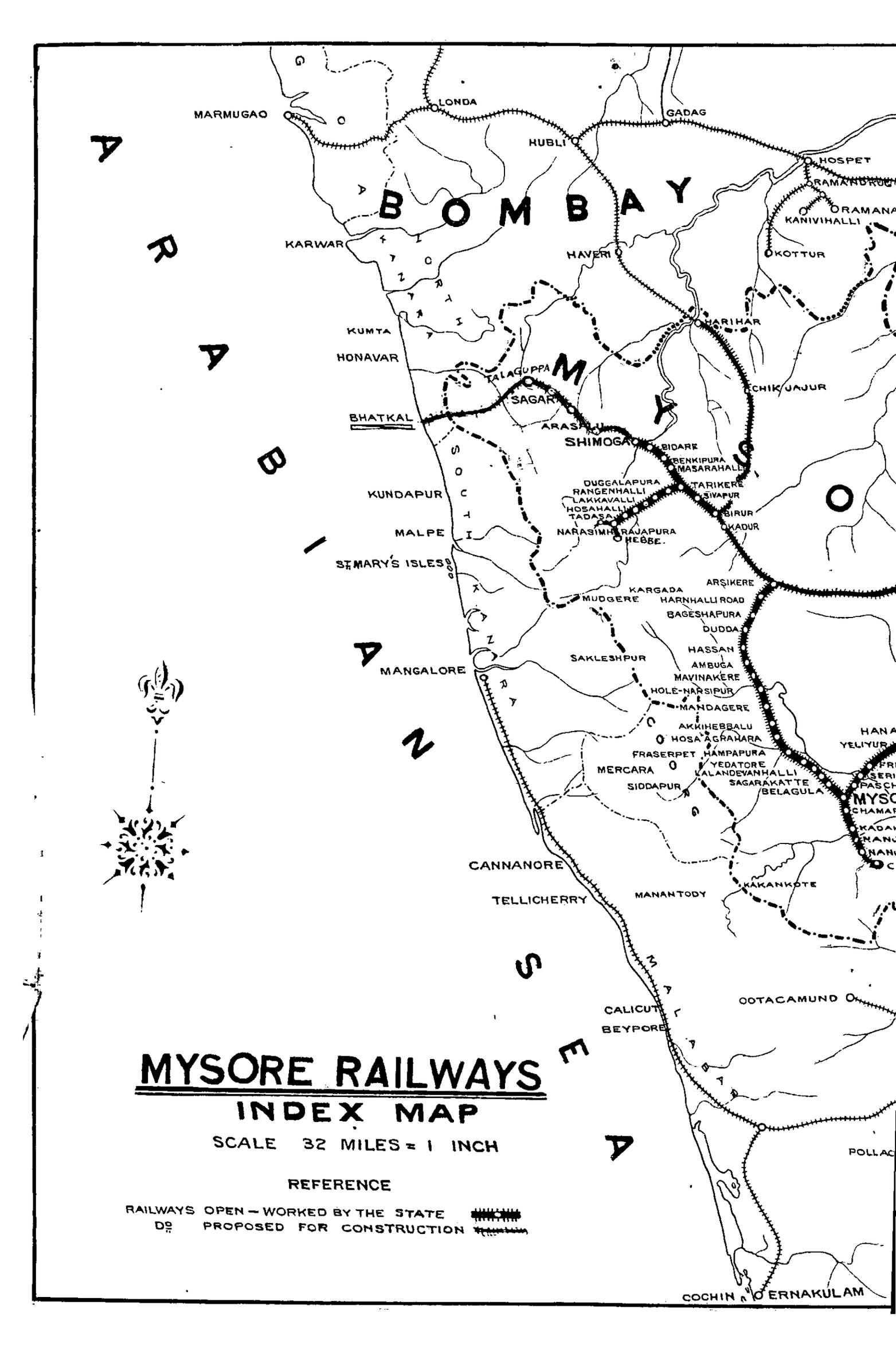
(vi) The extensive Ghat forests can be fully worked when the Railway is constructed, leading to additional forest revenue to the State.

Thus the project opens up the country in Mysore and British India and is a development work of great benefit to both. It l o

offers great facilities for cheap transport of the commodities from and to and through the area.

For the successful working of the Harbour, there must be ~~xxxxxxxx~~ undivided control and jurisdiction over Railway, lands and Harbour is a necessity.

I Rao 6-11-45



MYSORE RAILWAYS

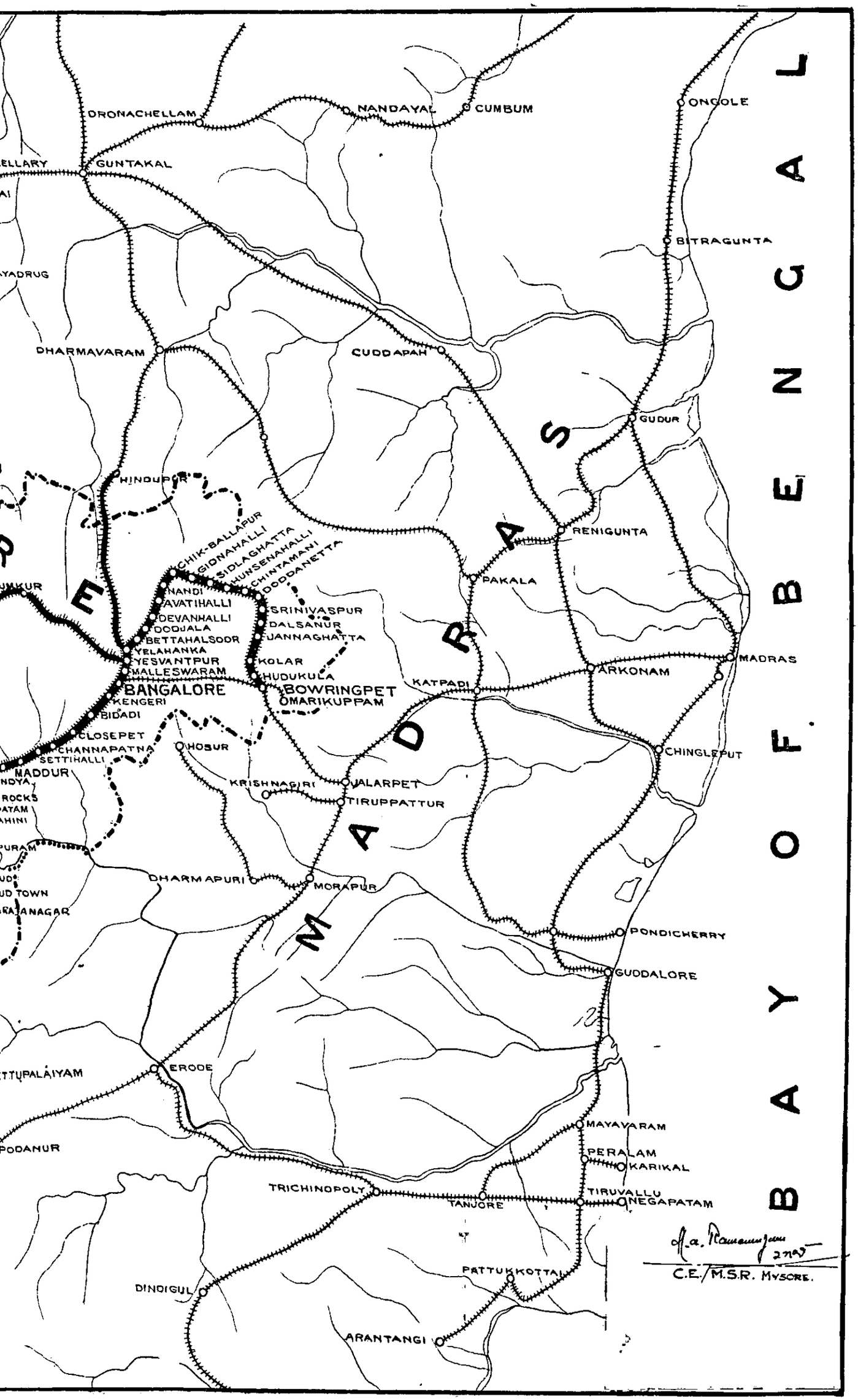
INDEX MAP

SCALE 32 MILES = 1 INCH

REFERENCE

RAILWAYS OPEN — WORKED BY THE STATE

Do PROPOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION



C.E./M.S.R. Mysore.

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF DISCUSSION WITH SIR EDWARD BENTHALL, MEMBER, WAR TRANSPORT

During my recent visit to Delhi, Sir Edward Benthall, the Hon'ble Member for War Transport, invited me to lunch at his residence on the 30th November, when I had a fairly long informal conversation with him on the Bhatkal Harbour project, the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway and other matters. The following brief summary of the discussion is submitted for the information of Government.

(i) The Bhatkal Harbour project: The Hon'ble Member said that he was impressed well with the possibilities of the project and was of opinion that it should be further investigated. There were two questions involved in it, one regarding the feasibility and practicability of the project, and the other, the question of jurisdiction over the Harbour and the Railway Line areas. With regard to the latter question, that of jurisdiction, the Hon'ble Member said that it was a matter that did not concern him or his Department. He however felt that there will be grave difficulties in the way of the cession of jurisdiction, as many considerations, sentimental and otherwise, were involved and the Government of Bombay may not agree to cede the territory. I pointed out that, in asking for jurisdiction, what the Mysore Government had in view was not so much the ceding of the areas, as the creation of conditions in which they will have the necessary liberty and facilities to work the Railway and the Harbour and to enforce the rules in this respect without interference from petty local authorities of another Government. The Hon'ble Member said that there was something in what I said but he feared that the experience in regard to Kathiawar Ports, which were in the jurisdiction of the States and the consequent customs difficulties were not such as would make the Government of Bombay take a

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favourable view of the ceding of jurisdiction over the Harbour. I, however, pointed out that the two cases were quite different. In regard to Kathiawar Ports, the question of the respective rights of the States and of the British Government was not clearly defined and was in dispute. In regard to Bhatkal, however, we would start with a clear and definite agreement on all points, and the implementing of which should not present any difficulties. The Hon'ble Member said that there was some point in this, but that, at any rate, it was a matter which did not concern him but concerned the Governments of Mysore and Bombay.

In regard to the project itself, he stated that there were certain other proposals for developing "rival harbours". It was therefore under contemplation to appoint a small committee, fully to go into the question of the development of minor deep-sea port, to consider the relative advantages of different projects and submit their recommendations. He suggested therefore that we should go ahead with our investigation and be prepared to satisfy the Committee about the feasibility and the advantage of the project.

(ii) Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway: The Hon'ble Member said that he had not received the official reference yet and I informed him that a letter had been issued through the Residency. The Hon'ble Member stated that he felt that it was a project that would eventually materialise, though it may not be given priority and taken up immediately; it would however be taken up later. I pointed out that this question has been under consideration for over half a century and the real question at issue was the taking up of this work as a priority project. I expressed my fear, borne out by experience, that deferring consideration meant practically shelving the project, with little chance of its

being taken up in the near future. I also added that if the project is not given a high place in the list of the present post-war projects, the possibility was that, by the time it was taken up for consideration, a slump may set in and the project may be put off again. The Hon'ble Member, however, said that apart from this, another objection was that the project would yield an exceedingly poor return on the heavy capital they had to invest. I stated that, even taking to account the loss on short-circuited traffic, the return on the capital according to South Indian Railway estimate, fell just short of 3%. The estimate of loss on account of short-circuited traffic was high. I added that the Mysore Government have already expressed their willingness to share, on an equitable basis, for a stipulated period, the net earnings that may acrue to them from the diversion of traffic to their Railway consequent on the construction of this link. In any event, it was beyond doubt that the proposed line would open up the country and develop the commerce and trade in the area. It was a development project of great benefit and the declared policy of the Government of India now was that such works would be undertaken in the larger interests of the country, even if they did not yield a standard return on capital invested. The Hon'ble Member said in reply that when the subject came up before him he would bear all these points in mind and give his sympathetic consideration. In the meantime, he asked me also to interest the Chief Commissioner and the Railway Board in the matter.

I subsequently met the Director of Traffic, Railway Board, and the Officer dealing with projects attached to the Railway Board. I understood from them that the programme of constructions in regard to through Railways passing between British India and Indian States had not yet been fixed and that they were

awaiting reports from Residents in regard to Railway lines passing through more than one State. On receipt of these, the question of fixing up a programme of constructions will be taken up. I explained to them our project and the salient points connected with it. As the Member of the Railway Board in charge of the projects is new and was not acquainted with the details of the project and as, then, he and the Chief Commissioner were very busy in connection with the meeting of the General Managers of Railways, it was suggested to me that it would be better if I can explain the position later, after our reference on the project has been received by the Board. I did not therefore contact the Member or the Chief Commissioner. I hope to receive information of the time when the subject is likely to be considered by the Railway Board when any further action that may be considered necessary may be taken.

In this connection, I may add that, while in Mysore, the Hon'ble Member casually asked me if the Mysore Government would be prepared to finance the construction of the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalaiyam Railway. I replied that I could not answer this straight away without consulting the Government but added that I had seen, in previous correspondence, indications to the effect that the State would be prepared to construct the line out of their own funds and work the Railway.

(iii) The Hindustan Aircraft Factory: The Hon'ble Member for War Transport incidentally mentioned that the R.A.F. did not seem to require this Factory for their purposes. In regard to the proposal for the building of the air-conditioned carriage bodies, he said that there are one or two points to be considered. In the first place, the capacity of the Workshops on major Railways in India for this work has to be taken into account. I pointed out that the number of coaches to

be built to meet the requirements of Railway in post-war years will be so large that the question of the Railway Workshops not having sufficient work on account of some orders being entrusted to the Factory would not seem to arise. He was inclined to agree with this view but stated that the question will no doubt be considered when further details about the supply of underframes were known.

(iv) Additional Locomotives and Waggons for our Railways: The Hon'ble Member had asked the Railway Board to see what assistance they could render us in this matter. The matter was discussed by me with the Director of Traffic, and at my request they have agreed to address the Military Headquarters asking them if they could arrange to spare, to meet our immediate traffic requirements, about SIX locomotives and 200 waggons on hire. On receipt of letter from Railway Board, I shall address Government further in this matter.

10-12-45
General Manager,
Mysore State Railway.